

Revealed Intentions

by YappiChick

Category: Halo

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Cortana, Master Chief/John-117

Status: Completed

Published: 2012-12-14 06:54:50

Updated: 2012-12-14 06:54:50

Packaged: 2016-04-27 03:54:35

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,072

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: "Have you ever thought about the two of us getting married?" / Set in my "Under the Surface" universe. Chief/Cortana, major AU, folks.

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Author's Notes: While I was reading through old notes (read: distracting myself from the two fics of epic proportions that I'm working on) and I found the first line of this fic scribbled on the notes that I had for Under the Surface (aka the everything in the Halo universe happens on Earth AU that I wrote about a year and a half ago). The plot has shifted a bit (yeah, I'm still working on the sequel. Slowly. Very slowly.) and I realized that John and Cortana would never have this conversation in the universe that has emerged. And thus, an AU of an AU was born. (The line and the subsequent conversation were too good to pass up.)

tl;dr This takes place in some sort of alternate universe set in the Under the Surface AU. (Confused?)

Timeline wise, this takes place after the sequel (aka the events in Halo: CE) that I haven't written yet.

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><p>"Have you ever thought about the two of us getting married?" Cortana asks John as she lay in the middle of the bed. The thick blankets are tucked under her arms; her head is propped up by two pillows -hers and his- as she watches him start to get dressed.</p>

"No," he answers quickly. Too quickly.

He pulls his white t-shirt over his head and turns back towards the rack that holds his uniform, believing that the conversation is

over.

Cortana has other ideas.

Cortana frowns as he pulls his pair of pants off a hanger. She rolls to face him, propping her head on her wrist as he continues to put on his uniform, and raises her right eyebrow. "You do realize it's practically impossible for you to lie to me, right?"

A second passes. Then, he lets out an annoyed sigh.

They are going to have this conversation whether he wants to or not.

"I don't think about it often," he confesses.

He leaves the jacket hanging and sits down on the bed next to Cortana. There is a sense of concern in his voice. "Why?"

Because I need to know that you're going to be here, no matter what happens with the Covenant, Halsey or anything else the universe is going to throw our way.

Out loud, she says, "I was thinking about it as I was laying here this morning, listening to you snore." She pauses for a moment. "We share a living space, we are each other's next of kin. I mean, we are practically married right now, if you think about it."

She watches as he glances at her bare left hand. "Not really." There is a wistfulness in his voice.

Suddenly, Cortana wishes she hadn't brought the issue up. They were finally back on solid ground in their relationship; the last thing she wants to do is to scare John so he hunkers behind his emotional bunker again. He may not come from behind it the next time.

She reaches over and covers his hand with her own. "Don't worry, John. I'm willing to wait. You're rid of me that easily."

A ghost of a smile touches his lips. "Lucky me."

Her lips pull downward as she assesses his overly clothed body. "Not so lucky. You're already dressed."

His brow furrows. "I have a meeting with Lord Hood at 0600 hours," he says seriously.

"I know." She taps her temple with a smirk. "If you don't hurry, you're going to be late."

He quickly grabs his jacket and puts it on. His shoes are next. Then, he moves to the door before turning around and facing Cortana. "My mother's wedding ring is in the back of the top drawer." He nods towards the dresser. "I plan on asking you to marry me when the war is over." He gets that wistful look again. "A happy ending for us."

Cortana sits up, letting the covers fall to her waist. This is the first time that John has spoken his long-term intentions with her. It takes her a moment to find her voice. "What if we don't make it until

the end?" she whispers, afraid of his answer.

He crosses the room and kneels in front of her. "We'll make it."

Before she can calculate the statistics that not one, but both of them can survive until the end of the war, John slides back onto the bed and pulls her into a kiss. It is slow and unhurried, as if he didn't have a meeting with an admiral in less than twenty minutes. For a fraction of a moment -practically an eon to an AI hybrid like Cortana- she believes his words and finds faith that they will be able to see peace brought to the planet.

When he pulls back, he tucks a stray hair behind her ear. "Nothing is going happen. To either of us. I promise."

She brings her hand up and touches the colored bars on his jacket. She lifts her eyes to meet his. "How can you be so sure?"

There is no doubt in his voice when he answers, "I lost you once. It won't happen again."

Cortana doesn't know if he is talking about what had happened in the Halo facility or how their relationship had dissolved after Reach, but it doesn't matter. She has never seen John more determined as long as she has known him.

Logic was going to have to take a backseat to faith in her Spartan. She leans forward and presses her lips against his smooth cheek. "I believe you."

A faint smile crosses his face. "Good." He stands up. "I need to go."

Cortana nods as he makes his way back to the door. Now that she has convinced herself to listen to John's optimism, there is something else pressing on her mind. Something small and, most likely, shiny. "You'd better hurry. Lord Hood doesn't take kindly to soldiers being late, even you."

John opens the door and walks through it.

When the door closes behind him, Cortana throws off the covers and jumps out of bed. She is halfway across the room when the door opens again.

John sticks his head through the door and gives her a knowing look. "And Cortana? No peeking at the ring."

End
file.